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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0350
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 3170
RUCNTXD/AMEMBASSY MAJURO PRIORITY 0098
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY PRIORITY 4040
RUEHSV/AMEMBASSY SUVA PRIORITY 0206
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 5500
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 2334
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 5017
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2614
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 3173
RUEHBAD/AMCONSUL PERTH 1201
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RHHJJPI/USPACOM HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 001929

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP, EAP/MTS, EAP/MLS, EAP/ANP
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SUBJECT: PAPUA -- PRO-SEPARATISTS HOLD LARGE, PEACEFUL
RALLIES

REF: JAKARTA 1870 AND PREVIOUS

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Classified By: Pol/C Joseph L. Novak, reasons 1.4(b+d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Pro-separatists have held large rallies in the Papuan region of eastern Indonesia. The rally in Jayapura, the capital of Papua Province, was particularly large by local standards, with a crowd of upwards of 2,000. Security forces acted with restraint, allowing the protests to proceed with a minimum of interference, and there was no violence. Contacts report an uptick of tension in the historically restive region, but the situation seems well within the ability of the GOI to manage. END SUMMARY.

RALLIES IN PAPUA

¶2. (U) There were large rallies in the Papuan region on October 16. Gatherings of various size were reported in Jayapura and the cities of Nabire and Manokwari. A crowd of upwards of 2,000 people participated in the rally in downtown Jayapura, up to a thousand in Manokwari and several hundred in Nabire.

¶3. (SBU) The rallies were unabashedly pro-separatist. Rally goers waved signs declaring "Freedom Now" and "Review the Act of 'No Choice.'" (Note: This refers to the Act of Free Choice of 1969 by which Papua formally entered the Indonesian union. Papuan activists claim the vote on the act was rigged.) One speaker at the Jayapura rally was quoted as stating: "We refuse the 1969 referendum and urge the Indonesian government to organize a new referendum of independence for the Papuan people." Another speaker stated: "Our children weren't born to be tortured and killed by Indonesian security forces. Our only wish is for Papuans to be treated well as human beings."

¶4. (U) It is unclear what exactly sparked the demonstrations. There are reports that many Papuans were celebrating reports that some British parliamentarians had met with Papuans who are pro-separatist. This meeting

reportedly took place in London recently. The Indonesian Ambassador to the UK was quoted in the press as stating that such a meeting took place, but it had nothing to do with any change in attitude by the UK government toward Indonesia's territorial integrity.

SECURITY FORCES KEEP THEIR COOL

15. (SBU) Indonesian security forces acted with restraint. Police took the lead in containing the marchers and the military was not called out, according to contacts. Police stopped marchers in Jayapura from entering the legislative council building, but there was no violence. As of October 17, large numbers of police are patrolling in Jayapura where there is some tension.

16. (SBU) The rallies seemed to be free of incidents involving the banned "Morning Star" flag. Considered a separatist symbol by the authorities, Papuans are subject to arrest for brandishing it and face possible serious legal charges, including of treason. Separately, there were reportedly some arrests for waving the flag in Nabire earlier this week. (Note: Papuans claim the flag is a cultural symbol and that it does not necessarily represent separatism.)

AN UPTICK IN TENSION

17. (C) From what our contacts report, Jayapura is somewhat tense, although normal business is being conducted in the city. Papuans clearly remain frustrated with Jakarta over its slow implementation of autonomy provisions and a general failure for economic development to take root. At this

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point, the situation is well within the ability of Jakarta to manage. Papuan activists appear to be building up for big demonstrations on December 1. This date marks the anniversary of the 1961 raising of the Morning Star flag during the end-game of Dutch rule in the region and is the annual commemorative day when Papuans traditionally take to the streets to protest.

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